



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

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*Commissioner*

To: Health Officers

From: Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D.  
West Nile Virus Coordinator  
Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program

Date: March 23, 2005

Subject: Bird testing for WNV Surveillance and Supplemental Courier Service for WNV samples

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation and support during the 2004 WNV season. While we experienced a mild WNV season in 2004, we need to continue surveillance efforts to ensure the safety and protection of our residents. The following are some reminders, and general information to enhance communication and reporting.

**The following is a list of personnel working for the WNV program. They can all be reached via phone at (609) 588 3121, and fax (609) 588 2546:**

Simi Octania-Pole, Ph.D. – WNV Coordinator.

Shereen Brynildsen, MS – Epidemiologist – Shereen is in charge of WNV human surveillance.

Floyd Borden – Administrative Analyst – Please direct all your queries regarding the WNV/GIS online system to Floyd. He will also be responsible for scheduling training sessions and granting access to the online application.

Kim Bernini – Clerk Typist – all inquiries pertaining to bird report faxes, mosquito submittal sheets, copies of summaries, etc. should be directed to Kim.

**Crow Testing and Reporting**

The West Nile Virus Working Group recommended bird testing to begin as usual in mid April. We will continue to expand bird testing to the entire corvid family. The most common corvids found in NJ are crows and blue jays. Additional information on corvid species, including pictures, can be found at the following websites –

<http://www.montereybay.com/creagrus/corvids.html>

<http://www.shades-of-night.com/aviary/corvidae.html>

We will start bird testing on **April 18, 2005** and will determine an end date based on how the season progresses. As in previous years, the 5 positive birds per municipality limit policy will remain in effect. However, birds from new areas within a large municipality with 5 positives may still be submitted for testing; please indicate on the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission that the specimen is from a "New Area".

**There is no change in the Dead/Ill Bird Report/Lab Submission forms this year. You can continue to use forms from 2004.**

**Please note that Dead/Ill Bird Reports for birds not submitted for testing still need to be entered into the system as bird reports, or sent to DHSS via fax at 609-588-2546. These are reported as "sightings". These data are crucial to enable prompt mosquito control and surveillance efforts on the local level, as dead crows are excellent early indicators of WNV activity in a locale.**

**Bird reports will continue till October 31, 2005.**

### **Positive Bird Notifications**

As in previous years, we will continue to send email updates listing WNV positive birds and mosquito pools twice a week. However, in the beginning of the season, these updates will be sent only when positive birds and mosquito pools are reported.

### **Courier Service**

LHDs can avail the services of the regular NJDHSS courier for sending avian samples to PHEL. In addition, Rutgers University will be providing supplemental courier services at the stops listed in the attachment. For the initial part of the season (till mosquito surveillance picks-up), please call Carol or Diane at 732-932-9564/65 Monday to Friday, between 9 AM and 2 PM to schedule a pick up by the Rutgers courier.

Thanks again for your help and cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.

### **Forms and protocols on the web**

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm>